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ON
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EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

BY THE
REV. W. A. O'CONNOR, B.A.

TRIN. COLL. DUBLIN :

Author of 'Faith and Works,' 'The Truth and the Church,' &c.



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P R E F A C E.



THE FOLLOWING ESSAY is an analysis of St. Paul's argument in his Epistle to the Romans, and was originally intended to appear as an introduction to a body of exegetical and doctrinal notes on that Epistle. Its separate publication arises from the desire to lay before the general reader an interpretation of a very difficult portion of Holy Scripture on the correctness of which he is quite competent to decide. A few notes on texts that seemed to require explanation have been appended.

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COMMENTARY
ON THE
EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

INTRODUCTION.

ROM. I. 1-17.

God had made known to the Jewish people by open revelation the fact of His existence, and had given them laws expressive of His character, so far as they were capable of comprehending it. These laws demanded unquestioning obedience, and appealed to the proper sanction of law, fear of punishment. It was inseparable from a revelation of this kind, that the nation to which it was given must always stand in the relation of ecclesiastical ancestors to the rest of the world, and that the generations of that people should hold a foremost place, separately on each expansion of the truth, and collectively on its final enforcement, in the privilege of its

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acceptance or in the responsibility of its rejection. The priority of honour and peril that follows on prior official designation remained with the Jews. But as men are always more ready to assert their privileges than to measure their responsibilities, it happened when the time arrived at which law was to give place to spirit, and fear to faith, that the Jews were unwilling to perceive or to acknowledge a revolution which must place their national precedence on a wholly altered basis; and that the Gentiles, on the other hand, looking only to the fact that the Gospel was now preached to them by the accredited messengers of God, became impatient that any trace whatever of national distinctions should remain. To allay the mutual jealousies that arose from hence, to reconcile the Jews to the extension of the Gospel among the Gentiles, and the Gentiles to Jewish instrumental priority, was the object of the writer of the Epistle to the Romans. That God is no respecter of persons, but that all men and all nations are perfectly equal in His sight, is the great fundamental truth by the establishment of which he seeks to silence all complaints, and the leading arguments that form the framework of the Epistle are constructed for the purpose of its demonstration. Those arguments have since been advanced to high

and independent places in the scheme of Christian doctrine; and it is strikingly characteristic of the Christian religion that those aspects of God's Government which have been singled forth as most representative of divine wisdom, and most promotive of human virtue, should have been first introduced as ancillary to the grand design of proving God's equal love to the whole human race. The novel sense of this comprehensiveness of the divine regards, as strange to a Jew, and as imposing, when once the narrow jealousy of caste had been overcome, as the sight of the infinite heavens would be to one who had throughout his life looked on a single speck of sky, lifts St. Paul above all notice of the humiliations that he endured as the preacher of a truth so sublime, yet so unpalatable to the claimants of God's exclusive favour. 'I am not ashamed,' he says, 'of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one who possesses the faculty of faith.' He then explains how this salvation is accomplished. The Gospel that proclaims the fact and method of God's government of the earth reveals thereby the personal justice of the divine character, and by so doing develops in the soul of man, in such proportion as there is faith to comprehend and appropriate it, a corresponding

justice. In this way man is restored to the image of God, not merely as his Creator, but in those peculiar traits of divine justice which the work of the Redeemer exhibits and exemplifies. It is essentially the nature of God's promises and standards to awaken faith in man's soul, and the Apostle is careful to remind his readers that this plan of bestowing salvation according to the capacity of faith, and not according to the prevalence of revealed law, is no new thing, inasmuch as under the Jewish dispensation the just man did not derive his spiritual life directly from his own justice, but ultimately from his faith, which received and reflected the justice of God.

JUSTIFICATION.

ROM. I. 18—IV. 24.

THE Apostle having stated his proposition that salvation by faith is offered to all men through the Gospel, proceeds to prove his case by showing that the first step in the process of salvation, namely justification, or reconciliation to God, the entrance into a state of conscious favour with God from one of alienation, is effected through faith, and is therefore open to all men. Justification is in reality a condition inseparable from the process of redemption through all the stages of the Christian's career; but distinct states may be conceived answering to the successive measures taken by Christ towards man's final salvation, and of those states justification is the first. Man is guilty before God, and is crushed down by the burden of his guilt and by his inability to recover himself, and it is therefore necessary that he should feel that God regards him as not being guilty, or as being justified, and that he should know

the means whereby God has provided that He should so consider him, before the work of his deliverance from evil and establishment in good can be fairly initiated. The Apostle, in order to prove that full salvation is open to Jew and Gentile equally, begins by proving that the first stage of salvation, justification, is open to Jew and Gentile equally. This he does by proving that justification is by faith. Now it is a fact, not without its proper significance, that the doctrine of justification by faith is not cited on authority or announced as a matter of revelation, but is the result of an elaborate inductive process, conducted in the presence of the reader and demanding the full occupation of his reason. The anger of God, the Apostle proceeds to show as the basis of his argument, is revealed against all men who, possessing the truth, do violence to it by their practical injustice. But all men know the truth; for they have either a revealed law, as the Jews, or a natural law, as Jews and Gentiles alike. Therefore the anger of God is declared against injustice in whomsoever it may be found, because no man can plead ignorance against the demands of justice. All men being thus responsible, it only remains to show that they have all transgressed in order to prove that they

are all equally guilty. The Apostle first describes the state of the world at large ; not the condition of the Gentiles only, but that of Gentiles and Jews when tried by the requirements of natural religion, and shows that in this relation no man has any right to claim superiority over another. All men, whatever other light they may have received, are accountable to God for the observance of the laws of nature. ‘Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them ; for God hath manifested it unto them. For the things of Him that cannot be seen, ever since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being perceived by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godship : so that they are without excuse.’ But ‘when they knew God they glorified Him not as God, neither gave thanks ; but became false in their reasonings, and their heart being without understanding was darkened.’ All have transgressed, and all are guilty ; and therefore, the Apostle argues, any man, whoever he may be, or whatever additional relation he may stand in to God because of a further revelation given to him, who judges his brother, is inexcusable in so doing, because he who assumes the office of judge does himself the very things which he condemns. The Jew, however he

might pervert and evade the law of Moses, was still amenable to the righteous judgment of God, who, by the eternal rule that is the foundation of all religion, will render to every man according to his works. Having been thus convicted of violating the moral law of the natural conscience, and so far silenced in his attempts to assert a pre-eminence over the other nations of the world, he is next tested by his own peculiar code. He is told that he dishonours God by breaking that very law of which it was his custom to boast, as if the mere possession of it made him superior to others. He is reminded that the distinguishing rite of his people will be of no avail to him unless he keeps the law of Moses; and that if he fails to keep that law, the condition of the uncircumcised Gentile who does keep the law of his natural conscience is better than his. To this St. Paul, who knew the spirit of his countrymen, imagines an objection. They were not at all prepared to admit that the custody of the law of Moses left them, after all, on a level with the Gentile world in a common accountability for actual obedience, or that circumcision did not in some way exempt them from moral obligations. If fulfilment of the law, they would say within themselves, be required equally from the Jew as from the Gentile,

what advantage has the Jew, or what profit is there of circumcision? The Apostle replies that the Jews had a great advantage in being the first people to whom God had committed His written laws, and in the opportunity thereby given to them of a higher obedience, and of being the instruments of communicating the knowledge of the true God to the other nations, and that their neglect of their opportunity and abuse of their office cannot nullify the advantageousness of God's original intentions. The opportunity had been theirs, though they had not availed themselves of it. The Jewish objector, whose design is still to maintain the superiority of his nation, argues, that even if on equal terms with the Gentiles in transgression, yet his transgression was the necessary means of displaying God's character and furthering his plans, and that therefore God cannot bear anger against him—that the disobedience of the chosen people cannot be treated in the same way as Gentile disobedience. The Apostle replies by a twofold argument: he first appeals to the fundamental ever-regulating axiom of religion, that the last judgment will be according to works. If respect of persons on God's part, or any merely formal relation to God on man's part, could supersede holiness of life, God could not, in any true sense, judge

the world. Unless the Judge of all the world does right, a judgment according to works is impossible. The second argument is, that if God's glory could be promoted by sin, we should be justified in doing evil deliberately that good might come, a conclusion which refutes itself. 'What, then,' the objector still proceeds to ask, 'are we surpassed by the Gentiles?' 'Not altogether,' is the answer, 'for we have before proved to the Jews and Gentiles that they are all under sin.' And then the Apostle superadds to the sentence of guilt already brought against the Jews as members of the human family, when tried by the light of natural religion, the expressly pronounced condemnation of their own national code: 'As it is written, There is none just, no, not one.' And as whatever the law says, it says to those who are under it, there can be no doubt that the sentence of general unrighteousness has immediate reference to the Jewish people; and thus, by the formal decision of their own law, every claim of superiority is stopped, every voice of boasting is silenced, and the Jews are made to stand on equal terms of guiltiness with the Gentiles before the law of God. From hence the Apostle infers that no man can be justified, or should seek to justify himself, by the deeds of the law of Moses. But it ought to be observed that this maxim is

founded on historical experience only. It is not described as possessing any intrinsic fitness as between God and man. It could not be any dishonour to God if man were to succeed in keeping the whole law, and so justifying himself; for how could the perfection of the creature be a dishonour to the Creator? The Apostle deals with the simple fact that no man has been justified by his perfect obedience to the Mosaic law, and he thence concludes that no man will be so justified. But as soon as this conclusion has been inductively arrived at, it is confronted by a principle still more comprehensive, from which the immediate object of the writer is deductively made good. Since man cannot be justified by his strict performance of the deeds of the law, therefore (it is not deemed necessary to state the middle proposition, that it is part of God's justice to justify man somehow) he must be justified by an act of God's justice which is irrespective of the law, which is received through faith in Christ, and is open to all who have the faculty of faith; 'for there is no difference, for all have sinned and fallen short of the praise of God, and are justified freely by His favour through the deliverance that is in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth as a basis of mercy through faith in His blood for the exhibition of His justice, by means

of the weakening of all bygone sins, in the forbearance of God ; for the exhibition, I say, of his justice at this present time, so that He may be just and justify him that believes in Jesus.' As the sin and shortcoming are universal, affecting Jew and Gentile equally, it follows that the method which repairs the mischief must be universal also. This method, moreover, contains a provision suitable to the time when national distinctions ceased, by which all inherited national sins and animosities should lose their power. Since, then, God justifies all men, without exception, who have faith in Jesus, salvation so far is open to all men. Thus the doctrine of justification by faith affords in itself conclusive evidence that the gospel was intended for all nations. Its immediate excellence over the doctrine of justification by the deeds of the law of Moses, in the present connection of the Apostle's thoughts, is that it puts an end to the exclusive pride of the Jews, fatal alike to their advance in true holiness and to the spread of truth. And as the whole drift of the argument has obviously been to bring out a conclusion that should do away with all unjust national pretensions, and prove all men to be equal in the sight of God, so it is expressly declared that the reason why the doctrine of justification by faith

has been thus formally inferred and stated is that it does this in an effectual manner. 'Where is boasting, then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? nay, but through the law of faith. Therefore we argue that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.' If justification were through an external revealed law, it must be confined to the people to whom that law was given, and God might be said to be the God of that people only; but if it be through an internal faculty or a moral principle common to the human mind, it must be open to all men. If God continued to manifest His will in a definite code, or in some peculiar customs and usages, or required a particular form of worship and obedience, His favour would be limited to the nation that knew the code or the form. But if He manifests His will through the death of the Son of Man, and appeals to the law of conscience, and addresses a habit or faculty whose special province it is to rise above the literal, the limited, and the formal, and to grasp the infinite, the spiritual, and the eternal, He must evidently be speaking to the whole family of Adam. 'Is He the God of the Jews only? Is He not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also: seeing it is one God which shall justify the circumcision

ultimately from faith, and the uncircumcision immediately through faith.'

But the claimant of exclusive national privileges, driven from his successive positions, has got one stronghold in which he hopes to defend himself against the assailant of his imaginary rights. Even though the knowledge of the law and the rite of circumcision may not confer an unconditional title to justification, and though the personal unrighteousness of the Jews be fully proved, yet, as the descendants of Abraham, they may still put forward a hereditary claim to the coveted advantage over the Gentiles. What, then, it is asked, was the experience, with respect to fleshly ordinances, of our father Abraham, whose acquired privileges are transmitted to us? For if he were justified by works, the disputed superiority remains; his descendants alone are justified in his justification, and his nation has a lawful right to boast of the prerogatives it inalienably possesses. The answer is, that, whatever may have been the goodness of Abraham's character, and however exemplary may have been his obedience, yet, when standing in the presence of God with any other inhabitant of the earth, he had not the slightest right to boast over that other because of the terms on which he held

his justification. Abraham was justified on grounds of mercy which were as absolutely necessary to him as to the greatest of transgressors. Therefore the Jew cannot boast over his fellow-man, as if he stood in a nearer or more favoured relation with God by holding a hereditary justification through Abraham. The boasting which is alluded to is not what is called the pride of self-righteousness, or a vaunting of one's independent justification won by personal merit from the Almighty, but the jealous and insolent spirit of religious caste, indulged in by men who are represented as not even making any pretence to personal righteousness, but as resting their claims solely on the obedience of their forefather Abraham, and exhibiting itself in language of invidious comparison. The case is not supposed of the Jews boasting absolutely that their favour with Heaven was won by Abraham's works, but of their boasting over the Gentiles because their favour with Heaven was so won. The former would be boasting over God, the latter is boasting over men. The Pharisee in the parable acknowledged his indebtedness to God for his superiority to other men at the very time that he boasted over the publican. The proof that Abraham had no right of boasting over others to hand down to his descendants, is contained in a

quotation from the Old Testament :—‘ Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for justice.’ This declares that Abraham was not justified by the perfect obedience of his works, but by his faith, which, because of its fulness and sincerity, was counted to him as if it were perfect obedience. If he had works sufficient to justify him, it would not be necessary that his faith should be counted to him as if it were works. But since his faith was counted to him instead of something else, it is evident that the something else was the originally demanded justifying medium, and that it was only in the absence of it that faith was mercifully accepted instead of it. When, therefore, it is said that Abraham’s faith was counted to him for righteousness, it is the same as saying that he got something to which he was not legally entitled, and that his justification was granted to him as a favour. Now, the Apostle argues, to the person who works out his justification, who purchases it by works performed to the full legal demand, his reward is not reckoned as a favour but as a debt, and this distinction of terms would be observed in describing it. But to the person who does not work out his justification, who cannot pay the price of perfect obedience for it, and is forced to offer faith instead, the reward is

reckoned and fitly described, not as a debt, but as a favour. Since, therefore, Abraham's justification was thus counted to him as a favour, it follows that he did not work out his justification, and was not justified by works, but by faith. That the expressions 'worketh' and 'worketh not' mean respectively 'works out' his justification, and 'does not work out' his justification, is obvious. The object of St. Paul is to prove that Abraham did not work out his justification. He gains his end by showing that the language used in reference to Abraham in the Old Testament is inapplicable 'to him that worketh,' and is only applicable 'to him that worketh not but believeth.' Therefore, 'worketh' means 'wins by work,' and 'worketh not but believeth' means 'does not win by work, but by faith.'

The point under consideration is not whether a man is justified by works or by faith as two separate and incongruous principles, but concerning the justification of one who has both faith and the works of faith in degree, whether he is justified through the medium of his faith or of his works. There is therefore no contrast or opposition between working and believing in this passage of Scripture. The man who is described as working must not be

supposed as working without faith. On the contrary, his works would be the unmistakable token and unerring measure of his faith; and even if they were so perfect that his reward were counted to him as a debt, and he would thus have had ground for boasting over other men, yet this would be so far from leading him to exalt himself before God, or to arrogate merit to himself, that it would only prove him to be possessed of a faith so strong and so clear that, looking through the infinite expanse of righteousness, he must confess that, after the performance of all that came within his narrow sphere, he was but an unprofitable servant at the best. But such a case is only imagined by St. Paul in order to distinguish it by its proper phraseology from the language that describes the circumstances of Abraham. If the father of believers could not justify himself by his works, and so work that his reward would be counted as a debt, we conclude that none of his spiritual descendants can. The evil of such a possibility would be that it would give occasion to man to glory over man, and to race to glory over race; and this is that outrage on humanity, and that temptation to measure ourselves from below rather than from above, to prevent which God has set the standard of earthly excellence

so high that none may attain unto it. Again, the account of 'him who worketh not but believeth' does not describe belief as the antithesis to works, nor yet as the substitute for absent works, but as the remedy for actual and present, though imperfect, works. Man's actions are twofold—the internal purpose and the external accomplishment of it. According to Scriptural teaching, the purpose, if not sufficiently strong, may exist without the accomplishment, but the accomplishment cannot exist without the purpose. Works, therefore, are the evidence and measure of faith. But they are not an exact measure, because in the nature of things works cannot rise to the level of faith, and the power of circumstances may keep them far below it. In consequence of this, faith is a truer criterion of character than works. But works are still the criterion of faith; so that there cannot possibly be any opposition between faith and *its* works, as there may between faith and the law, or the deeds of the law. Works cannot keep pace with faith, and if the faith be weak and intermittent they may be altogether wanting; but faith and the works of faith never can in fact or principle be opposed to each other. Where there are works which are not merely the works of law, there must be faith; and where there

is strong, undoubting, engrossing faith there must be works. Though a man is justified by his faith, and not by the works of faith, yet it is always assumed that in reality the faith which justifies is strong enough to produce works, although this may not be expressly stated when the general principle is under discussion as a theory. 'Working not' means working short of perfection, in spite of one's strenuous efforts to reach the lofty heights of virtue which faith reveals to the gaze. To the man who has thus laboured, who has done much, who is the dupe of no low ambition, the slave of no debasing vice, the inward conception of impracticable righteousness, the survey of the illimitable plan, the ever-approximating yet never-reaching aspiration of the soul, the power of beholding the sublime summits which tower higher as the step advances and the vision clears, is itself a consolation, and a fitness in the natural conscience for the reception of the justification which the mercy of God ratifies through the mediation of Christ. We must not suppose, then, that the justified believer is one who 'works not,' or who intentionally falls short of perfection and is contented with his ungodliness, because he believes in a God who justifies the ungodly. These expressions are the Apostle's historical description, and

do not at all, in any connection of doctrine, refer to the conscious condition of the believer's mind. It is true that a man is justified who believes in a God who has made provision for sin and shortcoming, when he strives to be perfect, and fails ; but it is not true that a man is justified who does not work because he believes in a God who justifies those who do not work, or who in any way designedly substitutes reliance on God's mercy for obedience to God's laws. God can take the earnest effort and treat it as if it were success ; but man must not separate the redemption of Christ from the example of Christ in such a way as to make regard for the one compensate for neglect of the other. Faith is a complex feeling, having reference to the whole character and revelation of God. It cannot dwell upon His mercy apart from His justice, because His mercy is His justice. The appropriateness of justification through faith to man's condition does not consist in its lowering the standard of excellence—for, in fact, it raises it and keeps it pure, fixing the thoughts on the first simple elements of right, and so guarding against the degeneracy of laws and secondary principles, and thereby establishing the law—but in the fact that faith, while aiming at perfection, comprehends within it a confession of the

believer's weakness, and an appeal to some external strength by which he is to be saved. This double character of faith may be easily understood by tracing out its deeper nature, and by recalling the obvious yet oft-forgotten Scriptural axiom, that Christianity is an addition to the law of conscience, and that the eternal and unchangeable moral law, as well as the specific remedy for its violation which the Gospel reveals, are both contemplated by the believer. But it is the essential nature of true, pure faith—that is, faith worthily set on a worthy object—that it raises a man above all dependence on or thoughts of himself. It is the instinctive reaching forth of the feeble to the mighty. It implies forgetfulness of self or mistrust of self, in reliance upon something that can triumph and deliver. He who believes in truth and justice does not trust in the intensity of his own belief, nor hope anything from the vigour of his own endeavours, but flings himself on the omnipotence of the principle to which he is devoted, and only hopes, if ever he thinks of himself apart, to be borne onward by its irresistible progress, as the straw is borne by the advancing tide. So it is also with him who believes in Christ. A comprehensive faith, therefore, as, on the one hand, it urges its possessor to a career of active Christian

enterprise, so, on the other, it contains a principle of help and refuge for his inevitable insufficiency; and in this its compound character, putting forth the whole energy of its nature, animating every faculty of the soul, embracing the entire circle of truths that are its proper objects, and with all, as far as self is concerned, relying on the work of another for reconciliation to God, it is counted and accepted as if it were unalloyed righteousness.

The Apostle next confirms the gratuitous character of justification by faith by another quotation from the Old Testament: ‘Even iv. 6. as David also describeth the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth justice without’ his possessing works which could claim justification, ‘saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.’ From this passage it is evident that the counting faith as justice, or the imputation of justice, or justification by faith, is effected by the means of pardon. A believer’s whole conduct consists of his faith and his works, his fallings short of perfect justice, and his sins or iniquities. If his sins or iniquities are forgiven and put out of the account, what remains is absolute justice in its degree. Not imputing sin

is the same thing as imputing justice, but only in the case of one who has strong working faith; for if the faith were weak and inoperative, even though the sins might be forgiven, there would be no justice left to be imputed. The nature of the process shows that weak faith cannot be imputed for justice. The words of the Apostle make it unmistakable that the method of justification is carried out by the removal of one of the existing quantities, and not by the importation of a foreign element. The mere removal of sin leaves an actual justice behind it; and this actual justice, which could not be placed to the believer's account as long as the sin remained, so soon as the sin is forgiven, is imputed to him—he gets credit for it, which is the same as saying that his faith is counted to him for justice, or that he is justified by faith. His strong faith, regarded through the divine mercy without any admixture of evil (the evil having had its penalty discharged by the death of Christ, with which the believer identifies himself), is counted to him, not as perfect righteousness in the sense of attaining to the highest standard of requirement, for this would be a fictitious bringing of all believers to one common level, but as absolute, unmixed righteousness, so that he get credit for just so

much fruit as the truth of God could produce in his nature. Justified believers are equal in innocence, unequal in positive righteousness. The full and active character of the faith that thus obtains pardon, is counted for justice and justifies, is not only inferable from the Apostle's argument, but is expressly and emphatically stated in the description of the faith of Abraham, 'who against hope believed in hope. . . . And being not weak in faith . . . he staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; and being fully persuaded that what He had promised He was able also to perform. And therefore it was imputed to him for justice.'

Having thus proved that Abraham was justified by faith, and that, consequently, his descendants have no inherited right of boasting over the Gentile world, the Apostle, before he passes from the subject, clears away one remaining ground of possible dispute on which the jealous and litigious spirit of his countrymen might make a last stand. The very doctrine which he has been labouring to leave on record as the perpetual demonstration of the divine impartiality must itself be guarded against being made an instrument of Jewish intolerance. Abraham had been brought

into covenant with God, and in his case also had justification by faith been first formally declared. Might not the justification, then, be a portion of the covenant, and, if so, was it not limited to Abraham's descendants? This, the Apostle argues, will depend on the period at which Abraham is said to have been justified, according as it was before or after the making of the covenant. If his faith was imputed to him for justice only after he was taken into covenant, and so placed under a law, justification by faith would be subordinated to the law, and would be a Jewish privilege. But in that case it would in reality cease to be a privilege, for, law being the governing principle, faith would be made void, and the promise be made of none effect, because the law, as proved in the history of the Jews, worketh wrath. If, on the other hand, Abraham was justified by faith before he was circumcised and brought under a law, faith would retain its original vigour and freedom, and would bring the blessedness of pardon upon all mankind. 'How was it then reckoned? when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision.' A promise was made to Abraham and to his seed that the whole world should inherit their blessing. This promise could not be fulfilled

through the law, because the law would not only limit it to those under the law, but would vitiate it even in this case, because a man cannot be justified by the law. 'Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace ; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed ; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham : who is the father of us all.'

LIFE.

ROM. IV. 25—VIII, 18.

ST. PAUL, in passing from justification by faith as an argument to prove that the Gospel is to be preached equally to Jew and Gentile, ascends by the natural connection of his subject to a higher region of Christian privilege, where he finds both a confirmation of his first proof and a fresh demonstration of his general conclusion. He analyses the work of Christ, and refers two of its component processes to their respective places in the achievement of human salvation. Man is justified and reconciled to God by identifying himself through faith with the death of Christ, and being reconciled and at peace with God, he enters into the true and eternal life of holiness by identifying himself through faith with the resurrection life of Christ. This is the power of the resurrection, and thus Christ was appointed Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by resurrection from the dead. Because we were

sinner, Christ died to justify us, and then because we were justified (by His death) He rose again to lead us onward in the path of active righteousness (iv. 25). His death established a common groundwork of favour for Jew and Gentile, and His resurrection offers to both equally the occasion and means of a renovated life. The Jews and Gentiles are equal, in that the latter are admitted by a common justification to the state of covenant which the Jews had already enjoyed; and they are also equal, in that there is opened equally to both the whole field of Christian discipline, in which suffering creates the capacity for glory, and the formal hope of conferred right grows into the vital hope of experienced and constituent holiness. The Apostle first supports this advanced position by the probabilities of the case. Friends to God are more worthy or capable of life than enemies were of justification. 'If, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.' Then he proceeds to demonstrate the universality of life in order that he may employ it as his second proof of God's impartial love for all mankind. On account of our being justified or reconciled, he suggests, as the next step after it, repeating the sentiment of iv. 25, universal

life is introduced into the world by the life of Christ after the manner in which universal death was introduced into the world by the death of Adam. The title of all men to equal justification was founded on the fact that all men were actual sinners; the title of all men to equal spiritual life, begun on earth and prolonged into eternity, is now founded on the fact that all men are liable to temporal death. The meaning is not that men could absolutely claim either justification or sanctification because of their sin or of their mortality, but that justification and sanctification being provided for the needs of mankind, all men are equally qualified for the privileges, because of the equal prevalence of the needs. Adam was the first who sinned; by him sin entered into the world; the punishment adjudged to his offence was death, and according to this precedent death passed on all men, because all have sinned. Now Adam was the type of Christ, and as Adam's death brought temporal death—death of the body—on all who follow him in his sin, so Christ's life brought eternal life—life of the soul—on all who follow Him in His righteousness. The difficulty that surrounds this passage arises in a great measure from not noticing that the leading idea in the argument is death, and that sin holds only an incidental and explanatory place. The

offer of spiritual life to every individual capable of faith and obedience is contended for on the ground that each individual is liable to death because of his conscious transgression of a known law. Adam brought temporal death on the world as the fixed penalty of transgression, and all men have incurred the penalty by more or less closely imitating the offence; therefore, Adam's Antitype, who came to bring spiritual life as the reward of obedience, would have fallen short of His type, if He did not bring life on all who through faith in Him repent, and more or less closely follow Him in His righteousness. Sin has been the leading term in the former proof of the Gospel being intended for all men, and it is here again, still in its actual and personal sense, employed for the same purpose as a secondary matter; but the main object of the Apostle being now not to vindicate man's equal title to justification, but to life; not sin, the logical antithesis to justification, but death, the logical antithesis to life, is chosen for that end. That we all are individually sinners entitles us equally with the Jews to justification; to show that we are equally entitled with the Jews to life, it must be prominently brought forward that we are all individually liable to death. The denial that life is the exclusive privilege of the whole

Jewish nation, bequeathed by Abraham, requires that death should not be represented as an indiscriminate human punishment merited and entailed by Adam's offence. All men, Jews and Gentiles, who commit sin, die ; all men, Jews and Gentiles, who in faith practise righteousness, live. 'Death passed unto all men for that all have sinned.' The Apostle here interrupts the course of his comparison, in order to make this statement good. The very fact that moral beings have been punished is a proof that it was their own sins that brought their punishment upon them. It was because all men sinned that death came unto all men, because 'so far as there was law in the world there was sin.' Law would not be enforced unless formal sin, the proper object of its cognisance, was in existence. To the extent that there has been law, manifested by punishment inflicted on moral agents, there must have been personal transgression. Sin is not imputed where there is no law to give formal existence to it. If there were no law prescribing a duty and sanctioned by a penalty, there would be no personal ascription of sin; but there has been personal ascription of sin in all cases, therefore it must have been in consequence of legal transgression in each case. If the Jews were to plead that God had given His law to their nation

only, and that therefore the spiritual life provided as the remedy for that death which was the penalty incurred by transgression, belonged properly and exclusively to them, the claim would be refuted by the fact that death had reigned with equal sway over the descendants of Abraham and the other tribes of mankind during the interval from Adam to Moses, when no publicly revealed law was yet in existence, and when Hebrews and Gentiles alike sinned only against the law of conscience, and could not transgress in the similitude of Adam's transgression. After the time of Moses the Israelites violated positive laws and offended in the form of Adam's offence, and they might attempt to infer from this that He who came to repair the loss brought by Adam, came more especially for those who sinned as he did; but they could not insist on such an inference without excluding from eternal life the founder and forefathers of their race. Sin was imputed to Abraham and the patriarchs on the same terms as to the Canaanites and Egyptians. The Apostle's argument does not include or touch on the case of infants or idiots. It was as a free moral being and an intelligent observer of the law that Adam would have lived for ever, and there is no reason for supposing that he would have been endued with immortality in any other character.

There is no doubt but that the lower animals in Paradise were subject to the law of death, and it is quite consistent with all the circumstances that the animal nature of human beings incapable of either sin or righteousness, if we can imagine such in Paradise, should be subject to the same law. On the other hand, the rule that all human beings are condemned to death from their birth because of Adam's sin, finds an insurmountable objection in the instances of Enoch and Elijah; whereas those instances are only exceptions establishing the rule that 'death passed unto all men, for that all have sinned.' All who have died and all who shall die have died and shall die because of their own sin, the penal sentence passed on Adam remaining still in force in the case of each of his descendants. The Apostle then returns to his projected comparison; but, instead of following it to an unconditional conclusion, he dwells on some points of difference that render the general analogy more suitable to his purpose. Had he gone on to say, that 'as by Adam sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed unto all men, inasmuch as all have sinned; so by Christ righteousness entered into the world, and life by righteousness, and so life passed unto all men, inasmuch as all have become righteous,' it would imply

more than was intended to be conveyed. The word 'many' is therefore substituted for 'all.' On the other hand, had the power of Christ to communicate life been described as only equal or commensurate with the power of Adam to communicate death, it might have appeared inadequate to the task of contending at one and the same time with the simultaneous sin of the universe, which was precisely the power that the Apostle claimed for Christ. The favour, he argues, is not as the offence, because the influence which the one person can exercise in the case of the favour is more comprehensive than the influence which the one person can exercise through the offence. If we admit that one may affect the fortunes of others, we must expect a wider result from Christ than from Adam. 'If through the offence of one many be dead, much more the favour of God and the gift by favour which is by one man Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many.' And there is a second difference, being the application to immediate circumstances of the first, which is repeated to support it, that the judgment brought into the world by Adam began with only one sinner and spread gradually through increasing generations, bringing the condemnation of death upon them; whereas the gift of Christ began with an existing

world of sinners and reversed this condemnation to acquittal. From the single fountain of Adam's transgression condemnation flowed till the earth was deluged with death ; then Christ commenced His mightier work, and rolled back the bitter waters to their very source. The argument is explained and limited by the special design which the Apostle had in view. He does not assert that the remedy is actually co-extensive with the disease, that every sinner is justified and that every one who has incurred death shall live the life of the blessed. This would be asserted or rejected as the conclusion if the question were whether the whole world was to be actually saved or whether it was not. But the question being whether the gospel was to be preached to Gentiles and Jews alike, the universality and identity of the disease prove only the equal fitness of the remedy for all, and the impartial offer of it to all. Had the Apostle represented the universality of death as being the direct result of Adam's sin, the inevitable conclusion must have been, that universal life is actually and immediately conferred by the obedience of Christ. The Apostle's object is to show that all men in their individuality, as distinguished from their nationality, are admissible to life, and he lays the basis of his proof by showing that all men

who are capable of apprehending the gospel, even though more prone to sin because of ancestral taint, are subject to death because of immediate personal transgression. The parallel between Adam and Christ is completed by a simple enumeration of the abstract particulars on either side without any reference to actual results. On Adam's side are ranged one offence, all men, condemnation ; on Christ's, one acquittal, all men, justification leading to life. The manner in which the different influences work is then described with its proper limitations. 'For as by the disobedience of one man many were constituted sinners, so by the obedience of one man many shall be constituted righteous.' Adam violated the law imposed on him, and according to the maxim of law, that he who offends in one point offends in all, he was treated as altogether guilty, his righteousness being left out of the account, and his sin only charged and punished with death. The same rule was applied to all his descendants ; they were treated and punished as altogether guilty. Christ obeyed the law, and thereby established a new precedent for His followers. Their sins are left out of the account, and their righteousness only is taken into consideration. Thus they are constituted righteous and are justified. In order that all men

might come under the sentence pronounced on Adam's sin, and so might be equally entitled to the mercy whereby that sentence was reversed, the moral law of the natural conscience came into the world with Adam. 'Moreover, law entered covertly that the offence might multiply. But where sin multiplied, favour exceedingly abounded, that as sin hath reigned in death even so might favour reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.'

There are two conceivable ends for which God's favour might be multiplied. Its display
 vi. 1. might be intended to magnify God's character, or it might be intended to awaken man to a knowledge of the real nature of sin in the light of God's surrounding love. It might be meant to promote God's glory or man's edification. In the former case it could be argued, that as the increase of God's glory was the end of all God's works, and the abounding of His favour would lead to the increase of His glory, and the continuance in sin of His creature man would furnish occasion for the multiplying of His grace, the end of creation would be answered by our continuing in sin. The Apostle foresees the probability that this view of the subject would be adopted. It is quite obvious that

the favour of God of which he speaks is not a magnetic influence acting with a dumb coercion on the soul, but an offer of kindness which may either appeal to that which is noble and grateful in our nature and win us to virtue, or else be taken advantage of by that which is sordid and ungenerous, as an excuse for self-indulgence. If the favour of God impelled men to hate sin as that by which God is outraged, it would be forced and unnatural to suppose them arguing of sin as of something by which God may be glorified. If it were an inspiration swaying its recipients in a direction of its own by an irresistible impulse, and drenching their consciences with just views of God, and man, and sin, the Apostle would never have thought it necessary to guard against its being enlisted as their guide to conscious iniquity. St. Paul knew much of the world of idolatry, more of the human heart, and still more of the religious habits and history of his own people, and so he was well aware that while it is the desire of human nature to commit sin, it is distinctively the desire of the ordinary religious nature to commit sin with a sanction ; that the secret or avowed cry to God of all religions, save the pure and unadulterated religion of Jesus Christ, has ever been, Give me the sin, and Thine shall be

the glory; that every creed which man has invented has been invented with this view; that every truth which man has perverted has been perverted with this view; that the atheist has less often sought a license for sinning in his unbelief than the ardent worshipper in his belief; that all idolatry, all superstition, all hypocrisy are no more than a compromise wherein the savage man threatens, and the cultured man flatters, his God in order that He may permit him to sin; that persecuting zeal on behalf of religion, fierce intolerance in defence of orthodoxy, the inquisitor's vengeance and the bigot's rage, have rarely been anything more than the selfish instincts of unreformed human nature rising in vindictive resistance when its pretext for sinning has been exposed and its immunity in sinning has been menaced. God seeks to make man righteous according to the divine standard, and man evades the effort by seeking to make God glorious according to the human standard. Religion is true or false in proportion as one or the other of these purposes is acknowledged in it. All is darkness and confusion when we retort upon God's concern for us; when we respond to the provision He makes for our want, by undertaking to add to His greatness; when what He gives to us and for us, to take away our

sin and our love of sin, we return to Him as an offering to avert His wrath, that we may still continue to sin. God's favour and love extend themselves and abound, in order that there may be no sinner on earth whom they do not reach. But if the abounding of God's favour and the display of His mercy be an end in itself, and if it minister to His conscious glory, then the opportunity for the abounding and the display may be provided by the prevalence of sin : and why may it not be consulted for by a particular race or class continuing in sin, as well as by searching for new objects of favour among the outcast populations of the Gentiles? The nature of the suggestion reveals the character of those to whom it is attributed. Not even the wildest license in metaphor could warrant the application to such persons of the description 'dead to sin.' Men who are insensible to temptation do not seek to bend the heavens in order to make the pathway of wrong-doing level to their wishes. Moreover, to the suggestion, 'Are we to continue in sin that favour may multiply?' the reply, 'No, because you are dead to sin,' would furnish no adequate objection. The real but concealed excuse for the contemplated continuance is, that it would entail no injury, inasmuch as God's omni-

potent favour would only find a larger field for its triumphant exercise. The reconciliation of worldly pride and passion with spiritual purity is too often the special demand made on the Almighty One by those who aspire to be his favoured people. Now if it could be said with any degree of truth that we were apathetic to sin, such an averment might much more reasonably be given in support of this demand than in refutation of it, because in that case the commission of sin could have no deteriorating effect on our spiritual nature. On the other hand, the answer, ‘ You cannot sin without hurt and injury, because sin has already condemned you to an inevitable temporal death, from which the favour of God will not deliver you ; and, if you continue in it, must involve you in still further and more calamitous consequences,’ is a convincing and appropriate reply. This is the reply which the Apostle makes. He recalls them from their concern for God’s glory to a consideration of their own circumstances. How shall we that are dead by sin live any longer therein ? We were under sentence of death because of sin. In the day that we sinned we died. But Christians, by their faith in Christ, have anticipated the period of their death by formally and solemnly professing to die with Christ,

so that their new and real life may commence from the time of that profession. We were liable to death as the penalty of our sins ; if the penalty were once discharged, we should be free ; having cancelled the debt, sin would have no further claim against us, no prescriptive right to further submission ; we should be justified, and the opportunities of a new life would be disclosed to us. But how can we die and yet have the opportunities of a new life ? In this way—that the Christian can date his death from the death of Christ, making by faith Christ's death his own death. Are you ignorant, the Apostle asks, that when you were enrolled by baptism as followers of Jesus Christ, it was with especial reference to his death that the enrolment was made ? In baptism we professed to die with Christ, and the force of the covenant then made is that we are considered as therein having died with Christ and as having been buried with Him, and thus the punishment being undergone, we are justified in order that we may live a new life of righteousness with Christ. 'Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death ; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.' But it must be remembered that

the death we profess to have died with Christ was that of our carnal nature which incurred death ; and the purpose of the death of Christ, and the meaning of our death with Him, is that our sinful propensities are to be suppressed and eradicated, the express understanding being that our account with sin was finally and for ever settled for us by Christ. ‘In that He died, he died by sin once for all.’ These solemn facts and considerations do not act on us magically or with the force of a charm. We must be deeply and practically conscious of them, that their moral significance may dwell in us and become the light of our daily life. In this and not in mystic union or mechanical grace lies their efficacy. ‘Know ye not that so many of us as were baptised into Jesus Christ were baptised into His death?’ ‘Knowing this that our old man is crucified with Him.’ ‘Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more.’ ‘Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed by sin, but alive by God.’ We must identify ourselves by faith with Christ in death and life. To make our faith vital and potent there must be a constant and conscious identification. Habitual consciousness is living and active faith. Christ died for us. His death was ours, in that it was undergone for our sins.

But if we make it ours as a discharge of the debt, we must also make it ours in its intention and covenant, that no further debt was to be willingly incurred. Christ died for us, and we make his death ours by dying with Him ; but if we die with Christ in the true purpose of His death, we rise with Him to the life of righteousness ; our resurrection has begun, our eternity is entered upon, and the separation of soul and body that awaits us is not to be apprehended as a penalty but expected as a consummation of that destruction of the body of sin which Christ commenced for us on the cross. God does not any longer speak to our fears or threaten us with punishment. He relaxes the terrors of His law and takes us into His confidence. Such conduct addresses itself to every generous instinct of our nature. ‘ You must not suffer sin to have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under favour.’

The description of Christianity as a system of favours and freedom contrasted with the law as one of penalties and terror was vi. 15. addressed by St. Paul to the nobler nature of man. But man’s baser nature is foremost to turn the occasion to its own purposes. Shall we sin because we are not threatened with punishment?

The Apostle first replies to the disposition which could conceive so ignoble a thought. He descends from his spiritual elevation. Recognising the infirmity of the flesh, he uses figures and arguments that will be best appreciated by the lower intelligence of commonplace humanity. In our present state we cannot quite escape servitude of some kind or degree. Liberation from the dominion of law consigns us either to the tyranny of sin or to the discipline of Christ. The choice may be decided on the mere ground of self-interest. 'When ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness. What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death. But now, being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.' The Apostle proceeds to another reply. That freedom or exemption from law which our selfish nature is so ready to abuse is not procured by the dissolution or reversal of law, but by the formal degradation of those unruly passions which had hitherto usurped the place of government, and which still seek to hold the mind in subjection. So

long as man's carnal nature remains his authorised representative and lord, and the mind is only a servant bound to execute its master's will, the whole being is under law and in conflict with it. Law is meant for the repression of irregular passions and violent acts ; and if from our whole constitution we select and put forward as ourselves that part which is prone to self-gratification and violence, it is evident that we deliberately place ourselves under legal supervision. We consist of mind and body, conscience and passion ; the mind or conscience is regarded by the law as congenial or reconcilable, the body as alien and irreconcilable. If we merge the mind in the body, the law is at war with our whole being, and we are under it and subject to it. We are under the law or not under it, as body or mind occupies the throne. When the Apostle, therefore, says that we are under grace and not under law, he means that the Gospel is a system that appeals to our minds, and that they who respond to its call and assume its obligations are understood to disown the supremacy of the selfish passions and to place themselves under the guidance of reason. The fact that mind rules the body sets mind and body free from legal control. Regenerated mind is supreme law in itself. It is the living

spirit of which written law is the stammering expression. The renewed spirit of man bows only to the Father of spirits. When man is conformed to the gospel, his mind is the immediate servant of God and his body is servant to his mind. When, therefore, the self-indulgent instinct pleads for license on the ground that we are no longer under the government of law, while the first answer is that though not servants of the law we are servants of God, the second explains that we have escaped from the dominion of the law only by the uniform and established subordination of the body to the enlarged and enlightened mind. Man was subject to law, because his bodily nature predominated. Under the gospel he is liberated from law because it is assumed that his regenerated mental nature predominates. The legal system spoke to the body. The gospel speaks to the mind. If the body continued foremost and uppermost, the voice of the law would still be heard in command. But the terms of the gospel decisively depose and depress the body and put aside its claims as unallowable. It is idle, therefore, to plead that we may sin on the ground that we are not under law; because unless our nature is reconstituted, we are still under law, and if it be reconstituted, we are delivered from law

only by the elevation of that part of our nature which is in unison with law and has no desire to sin. This transposition of the elements of our being is effected by faith in the death of Christ. The law has power over us while we live, but under the Gospel we die, and a new arrangement of our nature takes place. The marriage contract supplies an illustration of the Apostle's meaning. Just as the wife is under the control of the law so long as she is subject to her living husband, but is no longer under the control of the law when her subjection to her husband ceases on his death, so the soul or mind is under the control of the law while it is in subjection to the body, but ceases to be under the control of the law when its subjection to the body ceases on the death of the body. Now, the admitted purport of our baptismal profession is that our bodies were then put to death by the law through the death of the body of Christ, not in order that we should escape from the control of the law for the purpose of sinning, but in order that our souls, thus liberated from subjection to the body, and consequently from the control of the law, might never again fall under the power of either, but aspire to be united to the risen body of Christ, that so we might, instead of sinning, bring forth the fruit

of righteousness. We are not bound to the body, we are not subject to its sinful commands, its fierce passions, its pride and its vanity, because its old nature is crucified with Christ, and in this way we are free from the law. But seeing that we are free from the law on the condition and understanding that our old sinful body is dead and must remain dead, how can we plead our exemption from law as giving us a right to sin? Our exemption from law is only on the condition that the body which had heretofore seduced us into sin should be considered as crucified with Christ, and that our souls seek to attain to a body that is in agreement with its own heavenly aspirations. Sin, therefore, has no admitted place in the system of Christian freedom, but is solemnly and formally excluded from it. The soul is free from the control of the law on the express condition, and in the exact proportion, that it has control over the sinful body. When our minds were sunk and drowned in the flesh, our sinful passions brought us into collision with the law, and the result was our condemnation to death. But now having died with Christ in consequence of our sin, we are delivered from the law that we should serve God in newness of spirit and not in the oldness of the letter; in the new spirit of the law

which Christ has revealed, which enters into union with our mental nature and produces life and willing holiness and perfect freedom, and not in the old narrow letter which was in conflict with our bodily nature and produced rebellion and evasion and death. Thus our servitude to God is not a degrading bondage, but a free and loyal service.

Sin is transgression of law, but is there not some wider and prior principle of freedom and equity of which law itself is a violation? vii. 7. Has not the calm of nature been broken by the intrusion of law? And if our condition after we have escaped from law be better than our state before, must not law be an evil? And, moreover, must not that which produces sin and death be in itself sinful? The Apostle replies by referring to three successive stages of human progress in connection with which the part that law fulfils in the history of mankind may be traced. There is an elementary condition of man in which the physical propensities and the faculties of the reason are indiscriminately blended together. Intelligence is not organised and separated from the animal desires, but remains in chaotic union with them. It is spread like an instinct over the whole consciousness, and acts with the appetites from a hundred centres.

The moral sense is not yet developed into a separate and aggressive faculty. In this stage of his being, one which comes more or less within the experience of each individual, man is equally incapable of rebellion or obedience. There is no sin because there is no law. The light is there, but it is mingled with the darkness. An external command is needed to shape this formless void into order, and to give conscience a distinct existence. 'Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin but by the law.' Each man repeats the history of Adam. 'I was alive'—not condemned to death—'once without the law, but when the commandment came, sin took a new and separate form of life, and I became subject to death.' This is the first stage in man's moral progress. The perception of law distinguishes our faculties from each other, and assigns to them their different offices. God's design is to introduce and perpetuate a higher and truer life. As the state of ignorance of good and evil is tested by the commandment, each man sins, and according to the precedent in Adam's case, death is the penalty of disobedience. But still the first movement has been made: the possibility of a higher life has been approached: mind has been disentangled from our sensual nature, though at the cost of death to the

latter. The agent which effects this change must be holy, just, and good.

How can that which is good have been the cause of death? The law did not cause death: it only forced that which really causes death vii. 13. to reveal itself in its true character.

Wherever there was the germ of sin, there was the germ of death. Law has formally associated death with our lower nature: but it has also formally associated life with our higher nature. The principle that analyses the human heart, and sets the heavenly elements in antagonism to the earthly, affording to the heavenly the opportunities of eternal life, must be beneficial to man, although in the struggle which takes place temporal death becomes our invariable doom. The second stage in man's moral development commences from his knowledge of sin. A contest then arises between the mind and the flesh which must issue in the subjection and death of one or the other. The judgments of the mind and the affections of the body, in proportion as they assume a separate and independent consciousness, become more hostile and irreconcilable. Henceforth there can be no tolerance, no compromise. The body must obey the mind, or the mind the body. The body or the mind must die, the one the temporal,

or the other the eternal death. Law organised the contest, and law also helps to decide it according to man's better aspirations, because man, as the distinctive consciousness of his twofold nature goes on increasing, has become aware of the spiritual principle that lies under the letter of the law, and of its consequent superiority over his own moral nature, and accepts it as the ally of his spirit. The active and successful internal opposition to his desire to do what conscience approves and directs is at once the proof of an element in man that is not his true self, although it can clog and misguide his actions, and of the goodness of the law to which all the instincts of his true and higher nature aspire. The law and the mind are in unison. The law and the body are at war. The result is that, in consequence of the substantial unity of mind and body, the same law appears to be two different laws. It is at one time the law of the mind, or the law of God, at another the law of sin. As man views it from his bodily affections it is the law of sin, as he views it from his mind it is the law of God. It is the law of sin because it reveals and provokes sin in the body, showing that to be sin which did not appear to be sin before: it is the law of God because it reveals God to the mind, and gives help to the

mind's Godward tendencies. 'I delight,' the Apostle says, 'in the law of God, in my inner and deeper nature ; but there is in my flesh a different principle which wars against the law of God as accepted by my mind, and causes my bodily nature, instead of willingly submitting to it as my mind does, to be brought into an unwilling bondage to it.' The rebellious principle that is in the members of the body prevents the body from agreeing with God's law as a beneficent rule of life, and produces the result that it regards itself as being forced into slavery by a law which, as it appears and works in the members, is a sin-creating law. From our mental side we are brought into willing accord with the law : from our carnal side we are brought, because of the hostile principle that is in our members, into a forced captivity to it. The mind is gladly enlisted in the cause of God : the body is a driven and reluctant conscript in the same cause. The mind exults in its free submission ; the body groans under its forced bondage. 'Who,' the Apostle exclaims, 'shall free me from this lower nature, doomed to death by the unalterable bent of its sinful desires ?' But he has worked up his description to this agony of imaginary helplessness only for the purpose of showing at the fitting moment that he is already

in possession of the needed deliverance from the power of sin. 'Who shall deliver me?' he asks. The answer is inwardly felt; the thanksgiving is uttered aloud: 'I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.' The condition of man as affected by law only was one in which a conflict of his twofold personality was engendered without any other prospect than that of frequent and ignominious defeat. But when the spirit of the life and death of Christ enters into the contest the balance of forces is reversed. The man rises to a spiritual conscious identity never before experienced. It is no longer the mind as an isolated self obeying the law, and the body, as if another identity, a captive and a slave to that same law. It is the new man invested with new powers and functions, the child of the second Adam assuming a supreme indivisible personality, speaking with a sublime sovereign egotism of his double and discordant nature as brought under complete obedience to his homogeneous will. 'The sum of the matter is this: I, my regenerated and representative self, obey the law of God in whatever form it presents itself, whether it appears as the law of God or the law of sin. With my mind I obey it as the law of God, with my body I obey it as the law of sin. With my

mind I obey willingly, with my body unwillingly ; with my mind I obey it as the law that wins and attracts me ; with my body I obey it as the law which thwarts and provokes me ; but with my mind and body, mind willing, body unwilling, I, the whole man, obey.' This is the third stage. The first was one of unconscious and unsuspected sin without law (vii. 9). The second was one of sin developed and resisted by law (vii. 14). The third is one of sin conquered by spiritual assimilation with law (viii. 1). It is in this way, as the result of a renovating process, and not by a naked and unconditional decree, that true Christians are no longer under law and condemnation. The spirit of law has, by our union with Christ, who was its living Impersonation, liberated us from the letter of the law which provoked sin in our members and brought death upon us. This the unaided law could not accomplish, because its letter was more resisted by the flesh than its spirit was welcomed by the mind. The sin in the flesh was an obstacle to its action on the mind. The condemnatory accents of the law engaged man's chief attention, and drove him alternately to rebellion and despair. God then sent His Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and in especial reference to sin, in order that condemnation

might be exhausted on Him and acquittal fully bestowed upon us. Now that we are no longer under the cloud of condemnation, the brightness of the spiritual law dawns upon our souls. The spirit of law, acting on man's spirit and elevating it, proves more potent than the letter of the law tempting man's flesh. The inner man is more powerfully affected by the spirit than the outer man by the letter. The grander and wider range of vision that expands before the awakened mind, the conscious sympathies of the whole moral universe, the power and the desire to enter into all the struggles, sufferings, and troubles of virtue secured to us by our close connection with the struggle, the suffering, and the triumph of Christ, the heaven of pure delights, the infinitude of lofty aims, to which the soul is advanced as it erects itself to its true stature—these things are the outer forms of the mystery that produces the preponderance of our mental over our carnal nature. All the energies, all the sap and fertility, ascend to beautify the region of the soul, leaving the sinful flesh as the barren basement on which the renewed man takes his stand for a time, like some unpeopled and sterile world that exists only to preserve the balance of a system, and revolves as a counterpoise to other orbs in which

nature lavishes forth the treasures of life. The deliverance of man, so far as we can comprehend and consciously co-operate in its accomplishment, is effected by the presentation of superhumanly startling objects to the mind and the imparting of supernatural vitality to it thereby. The Son of God was sent that the contemplation of what He has done might arouse, invigorate, and enlarge man's faculties, waken his moral powers, and establish the pre-eminence of the Spirit over the flesh. Christianity is not merely a mystery and a sacrament, it is moreover a willing development. It is not only a worship, but a service. Its power consists not in extinguishing the passions and affections of the flesh, but in elevating and enlarging the aspirations of the mind. It is an education, not a spell. It is no philosopher's stone transmuting the baser metal into the more precious; it is an industry. It is health, not a specific. It is the superiority of mind and mental enjoyments over barbarian show and animal instincts. It is a divine civilisation promoted by spiritual ascendancy. The Apostle never allows his readers to forget that the attraction of sin is still a power to be actively and sedulously resisted. Nothing can exceed his carefulness in reiterating the warning that men are not saved by a

fiat or a form. The means of salvation are before us, but so are the allurements and stupifying comforts of our sensual nature. The power of sin is under our feet, but it is whole and unbroken ; all is conditional. ‘To be carnally minded is death ; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.’ ‘They that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you.’ ‘If any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of His.’ ‘If Christ be in you the body is dead on account of sin.’ ‘If ye live after the flesh ye shall die ; but if ye through the spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.’ The actual value of the highest privilege depends on the use we make of it.

PERFECTION.

Rom. viii. 19-39.

THE Apostle, having concluded his refutation of the perversions to which he knew his doctrine would be exposed, returns to the main line of his argument. It has been shown that the Jews and Gentiles are equal in their common title to justification and to life. It will now be shown that they are equal in their title to a common deliverance from the remaining bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. This final perfection of our nature furnishes the third proof of equality, and as it is also the consummation of the third stage of development of which the Apostle has just treated, he is led back to the direction which he had already marked out for himself (v. 2) by the coincidence of the two trains of thought. There is a continued ascent in the ground of his demonstration, justification, or formal admittance to favour rising through sanctification or essential

life to predestined sonship and perfect freedom. The first has been based on universal sin, the second on universal death; the third will be established on the universal travail and restless yearning of the human race: 'For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.' As the craving is universal, so will be the supply that satisfies it. Suffering and self-denial are the necessary steps by which we pass to joint-heirship with Christ; 'if so be that we suffer with Him that we may be also glorified together.' And our habitual repugnance to suffering is not only unsupported by a calculation of our best interests, but it is out of harmony with the innermost vibrations of our nature. Not only can we 'reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be developed in us,' but moreover there is in every human being a latent willingness to forego pleasure and endure pain for the sake of some ultimate unexperienced good. The 'earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.' Man is not finally happy in ease and self-indulgence. His very sin is the ignorant struggle of a dissatisfied condition. Adam's fall was the first step in the progress from the sonship of creation

to the sonship of perfect spiritual affinity. It was a false step, but it initiated the movement. It was motion in the wrong direction, but it aided God's purpose, in so far as it was a departure from a state in which man was not intended to continue. Adam was not created absolutely and immutably perfect, because absolute and immutable perfection is formed and disciplined, not created. His liability to fall was only the accident of his capacity to rise to a state of permanent holiness. This was the end for which God created our nature. It was made subject to vanity and error, but it was not meant to remain satisfied and contented with this condition, because by virtue of the very touch of the Creator's hand it was inspired with an instinct of hope that clings to it even in its fall, and points out to it unceasingly its true destiny. Our nature itself struggles for deliverance, not drawn on by the superficial attraction of an external object, but stung into exertion by the transforming power of an inward expectancy. The groans and pangs of all past time were the travelling of mankind towards regeneration, and even we Christians in whom this regeneration has commenced have still much to hope and to labour for ; because this vague, unsatisfied hungering and thirsting after righteousness, this striving after an attainment

that always grows beyond our grasp, this moral restlessness that chafes under every remaining infirmity, and strains with a deathless desire after an undefined ideal, has ever been the God-given element within us that is working out and urging us towards that invigoration and maturity of virtue to which alone eternity can be safely entrusted, because then the true tendency is fixed for ever and a fall is impossible. If any near or definable or external standard were set before us, our salvation would hang suspended. The very Spirit of God that comes to aid our struggles does not suggest a definite object; but intercedes for us in a voice as inarticulate and with purpose as unexpressed as our own aspirations. This sightless longing of the human heart and this dumb pleading of the Divine Spirit are in accordance with God's method. The traveller towards God's perfect reign sees no boundary, imagines no termination to his journey. Only the hope that hits no mark draws us on. The prayer that is echoed back arrests our progress. God allows our best prayers to fly past. Our pursuit is characterised by its object. If we sought repose in a throne, or a rapture, or a vision, or a heaven piled on countless heavens, it would reflect immobility in our spirits. A fixed object or period in the future would

dam the flow and stifle the spring of our longings. The living waters have neither shore nor sea, but flow on for ever. The Christian does not seek repose, but greater power for boundless exertion. This is the rest, the equilibrium of his soul. God clears the spaces of eternity as his path, and unfolds infinity as the Paradise he is to till, and endows his soul with a ceaseless motive. God acts thus with us, and we enter gladly on the unqualified pursuit. We wish to linger on no secondary aims. We know that the whole stream of events, the immeasurableness of circumstances, and all the orderings of Providence combine to further and press forward the welfare of those who are possessed by this insatiate love, to secure the victory of the soldiers whom God has enlisted for this interminable campaign—of us whose names are now on the muster-roll of our Saviour. The Apostle has thus brought his argument among the realities of the then present. Jews and Gentiles alike were at that time embodied in the brotherhood of Christian saints. On this historical fact, answering to the universal cry for redemption, he builds the fit application to both equally of those terms of privilege which the Jews had heretofore claimed exclusively for themselves. Jews and Gentiles were as a fact called or com-

missioned by God. This actual call St. Paul makes the middle term from which he infers past foreknowledge and future glory. If the Gentiles were called, they must have been foreknown and predestinated. He implies nothing as to the value of those words. Whatever their worth, they were open to the whole world. Gentiles were actually called. Therefore the Jews could not be more fully foreknown or predestinated than they. The Apostle does not say that they were called in consequence of having been foreknown, but he argues that as they were certainly called, the foreknowledge and predestination of God must attach to them in whatever sense they attach to others. The foreknowledge was not the metaphysical cause of the calling, but the calling is the logical proof of the foreknowledge. The fact is not founded on the mystery, but the mystery on the fact. There are two premises on which he grounds his inferences. Gentiles were there and then summoned as citizens of God's kingdom, and all things that happened were providentially promoting their growth in holiness. What more than this could the Jews say for themselves? They could claim the purpose of God as pledged to their security. But facts vindicated this privilege for the Gentiles as strongly as promises did for the Jews. The Gentiles are thus

identified retrospectively with God's foreknowledge. The persons actually enrolled in God's kingdom must be the objects of God's purpose. How came they to be so enrolled or called? Was their call a sudden and unforeseen thing? No, it must have been preceded by foreknowledge and predestination. 'Whom God foreknew He predestinated, and whom He predestinated He called.' Therefore the Gentiles, being called, must have been predestinated and foreknown; they can trace their title to equality with the Jews in the secret archives of the primeval love. But more conclusive than the retrospect of the past is the privilege of the present and the prospect of the future—'whom He called them He also justified, and whom He justified them He also glorified.' What can human jealousies avail against this emphatic signification of the Divine will? If God be for us, who can be against us? If God gave His Son for us all, will He distribute the other blessings unequally? And how can the Jews, whose trust is in election, object against those whom God has manifestly elected? The Apostle indulges in the assured hope that the Christians of his day, Gentiles as well as Jews, have already attained by moral and spiritual growth a measure of that fixed and final redemption, their common claim to which he has inferred from the

common aspirations of their nature. 'I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ our Lord.'

ELECTION.

ROM. IX.—XI.

ST. PAUL now approaches a phase of his argument which he instinctively knew would cut the feelings of his countrymen to the quick. Hitherto he has been establishing the right of other nations to only equal privileges with the Jews. He is now about to unfold the designs of Providence in a light which will exhibit the Gentiles as not merely admitted to equal terms of favour, but as at least partially supplanting the Jews in that office and mission which had been the object of their original call, their conscious possession of which was the bond of national cohesion. They had been set apart as the depositaries of the knowledge and worship of the true God. That the other nations should participate in the secondary blessings of this knowledge equally with the nation of priests who were its chosen celebrants, was an offence ; but that the other nations should be promoted to a share in the priesthood itself would

be to remove the very grounds of their distinctive national existence. What, then, would it be to declare that the Jews, as a people, had failed to discern the line of duty which a new dispensation had pointed out to them, and that the Gentiles must now succeed to their place as the missionaries of truth? The Apostle's task was rendered still more difficult by the fact that he, a Jew, a member of the degraded nation, appeared himself in the front rank of the intruders by whom his countrymen were to be ejected from the post they had so long and so proudly held. He assures them that the conflict between his Jewish sympathies and his personal sense of the peculiar office to which he had been called in the Christian Church was a source of the deepest pain and sorrow to him, and that he would gladly sacrifice his own election as an apostle if thereby the interests of his nation could be served. It would be sufficient honour for him to be an Israelite, one of the chosen people whom God had adopted as His children, and made the guardians of His laws, and of whom came in the flesh He who was God over all men without distinction. But St. Paul would guard his countrymen from the disgrace of its being supposed that they had frustrated the designs of God, or that the alteration

which was taking place in His ecclesiastical arrangements was wholly without precedent in past history. The grief of the Apostle was not to be taken as an admission of his seeing in the rejection of the Jews a proof that the administration of the word of God had failed. Now, if election were an end in itself, and not a means towards an end, and if the Jews had been elected for their own salvation's sake, and not as agents in preserving and communicating the method of general salvation, beyond question the deposition of the Jewish nation which took place on the outspread of Christianity must have been a failure of God's intention. St. Paul's assertion that God's word had not failed sends us peremptorily to seek some meaning and purpose in election, which may still continue to be promoted, though the race or nation which had been elect ceases to be elect. This we at once find if we assume that election is a method in the Divine government for keeping truth and justice before the minds of men, an appointment of means and agencies towards that purpose; for then it is quite clear that God may appoint and displace, alter and limit his instruments without room being given for the objection that His end had not been gained, or was not in course of being gained. This objection could be made only in case the salva-

tion of the elect persons was the end, and the only end, of election. If such were the case, a change of election would be an undoubted failure of God's word. But God's word did not fail, therefore we can infer that election is instrumental, and not final. St. Paul founds his assertion that God's word had not failed, and that, consequently, the Jewish nation had fulfilled and was fulfilling in its measure the purpose of its election, on the fact that the nature of election does not imply that the whole of the chosen race must continue to be recognised and successful ministers of God's will. If only a portion of them connect the ages by the unbroken lines of truth, the end of election has been answered. Though a nation may be chosen, it never can claim in its entirety the privileges of election, because, being chosen for a certain purpose, God always reserves to Himself the prerogative of arbitrarily deciding who are fittest for His purpose within the area of His original choice. The nature of election is this, that God elects, and the nation is elected, with such reservations as God pleases. God chose Israel, but all who belong to Israel are not doing the work for which the choice was made, and are therefore not Israel according to God's primary intention. He chooses among nations for a purpose, and only those within the nation which

He chooses, who in His judgment are fitted to fulfil that purpose, are the real objects of His choice. He alone is judge. He chose Abraham, but all the descendants of Abraham did not continue elect. Abraham could not convey his election to all his children, but only to those referred to in the promise made to him. A still more striking case is that of Rebekah. The limitations made in the case of Abraham's children had a natural line of demarcation between the offspring of his two wives; but the promise made to Rebekah, whose children were the children of one father, clearly exhibits the perfect freedom of God's appointments. Two nations different in character and pursuits were to descend from her unborn children, and even before the birth of those children God rejected one nation as the instrument of His will, and made choice of the other. So that God acts in His elective purpose absolutely from His own inscrutable wisdom. The question is not decided on the score of merit or fidelity or works. The deposition of the Jewish nation is not necessarily an arraignment of their zeal in God's service according to their knowledge. In fact, we know that when a fresh development of God's purpose takes place, the people who were entrusted with its previous stage are often the latest to acknowledge

its new manifestation, and that, by their practical adherence to that form of truth which was at first committed to them, they are a hindrance rather than a help to progress. St. Paul does not enter on this consideration now: he would save his countrymen from the humiliation of being rejected as instruments of God's will through failure in their work, and this he effectively does by proving that God chooses His instruments quite irrespectively of their work or their willingness. He does not yet explain what are the principles which guide the Almighty in His election of nations. He dwells only on the choice being so absolutely the act of God Himself as to shield from censure on the score of zeal the agent who has been rejected, and to silence from boasting the agent who has been chosen. God in reality chooses for fitness, and rejects for unfitness, but as what He knows to be fitness would seem to a conscientious Jew to be unfitness, and what He knows to be unfitness would seem the reverse, St. Paul reserves that point, and insists on the arbitrary and absolute right of God to elect as He wills. Esau may appear to us a fitter representative of the chosen race than Jacob; yet God hated Esau as a depositary of His truth, and loved Jacob. Might not this mode of proceeding, as inferred by the

Apostle, be turned into a charge against the justice of God? No, the Apostle replies, for God Himself has explicitly spoken to the same effect. It is a fundamental axiom with St. Paul that God cannot act unjustly. The suspicion of injustice against God that arises from his argument he meets by the rejoinder that God Himself has said the same thing in direct and positive language: 'I will pity whomsoever I pity,' i.e. I will bestow my confidence on whomsoever I will. In short, man's zeal and energy cannot decide who is to do God's work on earth. It is not of him that is willing, or him that is ready to execute, that the choice of God's servants proceeds, but from the will of God. Therefore the rejection of the Jewish people is no impeachment of their zeal for God, and no hindrance to their further employment in God's service in such way as He may please (compare x. 2). He has an object in showing mercy, or distinguishing by His regards, other than, and in addition to, the benefit of the nation so distinguished, and He has an object in casting off and lowering a nation apart from the loss or dishonour inflicted on the nation so cast off and lowered. He manifests His favour that the world may behold His truth, and He manifests His disfavour that the world may behold His truth. 'For the Scripture

saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might show my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth.' The language used in the Old Testament concerning Pharaoh is introduced by the Apostle for the purpose of illustrating God's sovereign right to permit the self-destruction of communities which, inspired with the energy of a superseded revelation, and sheltered by their devotion to an abrogated law, enter into fanatical contest with the fuller truth that has been given, and are blinded by its light. God still makes use of those communities to display His reign on earth. He has willing and unwilling, conscious and unconscious, ministers and witnesses of His justice. Whomsoever He wills He employs in either character. He has mercy on whom He wills, and hardens whom He wills. But if God thus wills to harden, and His will is not to be questioned, what room is left for blame? St. Paul has not been speaking of creating tender or obdurate hearts, and impressible or unimpressible consciences. The question is concerning the fashioning and selecting of instruments for signalising God's truth and justice to the universe from materials already existing. God only can determine when a community is best suited to be an instrument of His mercy,

receiving it with intelligent hearts, and proclaiming it abroad as the end for which it has received it ; and when it is only suited to be an instrument of God's wrath, glorying in its own obdurate refusal to learn, and stumbling in self-chosen darkness amid the splendour of day. Who will dispute God's right to do this ? Can anything that has been shaped to work out an end say to him that shaped it, Why have you done so with me ? All artificial combinations of men, all forms of society, all political or governmental or ecclesiastical unions, all stages of growth and knowledge and power in communities, are in the hands of God, as clay in the hands of the potter. There are two ministries of truth—one that wins to justice by the glory of its example, and one that warns from injustice by the terror of its doom. Can a people who have blinded their eyes, and hardened their hearts, exclaim against the justice of God because He employs them in the only way that in their case is now possible ? The potter from the clay before him selects some for vessels of dignified use, others for vessels of meaner use, but all for man's use. So it is with God's application of nations and Churches. They all are His materials for signalling His reign, and He alone can decide what part each is fit for. As the potter moulds

vessels of different uses, but all for use, from the clay he finds ready to his hand, so God takes from our common humanity instruments for displaying His mercy or His severity, but all for the world's good. One vessel is not made a vessel of honour for its own glory, nor another a vessel of dishonour for its own degradation, but each is assigned its respective part for the use and benefit of man. Has not God power so to deal with nations? May He not apply them in such way as He sees fit for the regeneration and enlightenment of coming ages? On this showing of the case, the Jews have no ground for complaint. But how will it be if it appear that God's method of using the decay and ruin of apostate Churches for the manifestation of His truth and power has in their instance been conducted with circumstances of special leniency?—if, though willing to display His wrath, God yet bore with the Jews long after the period when they had fitted themselves as vessels of wrath and examples of destruction, and did so for the express purpose of preparing a portion of them to be instruments of exhibiting His glory and His mercy instead? 'Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour? What if God, when ready to show His wrath and to make His

power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction, and acted thus in order that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy which He had afore prepared unto glory, even us whom He hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?’ The Apostle thus merges his vindication of his countrymen and his assurance of God’s continued favour towards them in the assertion of the joint adoption of the Gentiles as guardians and ministers of truth. He supports his conclusion by two sets of quotations from two of the prophets. The first two quotations are from Hosea, and are applied to the election of the Gentiles. ‘I will call them my people which were not my people ; and her beloved which was not beloved. And it shall come to pass that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people, there shall they be called the children of the living God.’ Those passages, originally spoken of the Jews, are given as instances that God carries out His unvarying plan by such varieties of means as seem best to Him. The wisdom that elects, rejects, and re-elects the Jews must not be resisted when it now elects the Gentiles, in addition to the Jews. The second two quotations are from Isaiah, and describe the fact that only a small frag-

ment of the Jewish nation would be retained in God's formal service for the propagation of His kingdom. The wisdom that freely elected may with equal freedom limit or reject. 'Esaias also crieth concerning Israel, though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be preserved: for in justice He completes and limits the ministry of His word: because a limited ministry of His word will the Lord make upon the earth. And as Esaias said before, Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we had been as Sodoma, and had been made like unto Gomorrha.' So far we have seen the Divine side of election. God's right is sovereign and supreme, and the human instruments of His purpose must submit without murmuring to His wisdom as He takes them up and lays them down.

But can no explanation be given of the transaction that will reduce it to the level of man's
 ix. 30. understanding? The whole mystery of arbitrary election may be explained on the human side by the circumstance that a fresh revelation of Divine truth had been made, and that the Gentiles had shown a readier appreciation of it than the Jews, and were therefore appointed as the inheritors and guardians of the kingdom of heaven.

While law had been the expression of God's purpose, the Jews continued the chosen people. But their fidelity had been to the casket, and not to the jewel it contained. The law had never been vitally rooted in their hearts, nor had it put forth living leaves, nor blossomed, nor produced the harvest of holiness. Therefore, when it budded, and bloomed into full spiritual efflorescence, and bore its perfect fruits in the life and teaching of the Son of Man, the nation was unprepared for the miracle. They could neither enter into the spirit of His doctrine, nor feel the need of His mediation. Their obedience to the letter and ceremonies of the law fully satisfied, in their estimation, all the demands of righteousness. The Gentiles, on the other hand, who had no revealed law, and who therefore had never sought to attain righteousness by its means, when this attainment was brought before them, and facilitated by faith, closed with the offer, and thus made themselves the people of God's choice, so far as they believed. They attained righteousness by having their faith accounted to them as righteousness. The Jews, narrowed by their habitual attachment to law, strove to attain righteousness by a formal obedience to its letter, making justice to consist in this, and thus they at once missed their aim, and deluded their

conscience. When the attainment of righteousness, therefore, was preached through the death of Christ, the Gentiles, who did not imagine that they were already fulfilling the law, and who consequently felt that they needed justification, welcomed the message; while the Jews, who supposed that they were already fulfilling the law, felt no need of a Redeemer, or of reconciliation to God, and rejected what appeared to them a needless mercy. Christ procuring reconciliation for men by causing their faith to be taken instead of perfect justice, was a stumbling-block to the Jews, but to the Gentiles a source of joy and hope. The rock on which the rulers of the Jewish nation split was their ascribing to God the same idea of justice which they cherished themselves. Their justice or righteousness was one-sided, exacting, and unmerciful, and their lawyers laid it in this form an insupportable burthen on the people. They supposed that God's justice was of the same kind, and they believed that they satisfied it by the formalities of worship and the respectabilities of their higher grade of social life. But in the character of God justice and mercy are one—not reconciled or blended, but identical. When God is merciful to man, He is just; and when He is just, He is merciful. He, therefore, who with an enlightened mind submits to the

righteousness or justice of God, thereby acknowledges his need of mercy, and his inability to meet God in any other character than as the Merciful One. He is aware that it is by mercy that he is permitted to enter on the career of righteousness in his own conduct, and that his highest attainments in it will still need mercy, through Christ, to ensure acceptance. He knows that his righteousness will fail him, and that it is his faith in Christ which will finally have to stand for him instead of it. This the Jews could not understand; they sought righteousness according to a human model, and imagining that they attained it, they did not submit themselves to the righteousness of God. The law, when spiritually discerned, or when undertaken by any one who exercises the faculty of faith, leads necessarily to Christ. The man who has the keen and distant vision that faith bestows perceives the whole scope and inner intention of the law, and, knowing that he cannot satisfy its requirements, he is conscious that he needs a Redeemer who may both aid him in the pursuit of righteousness and be a refuge to him through faith where he fails. But the Jews, not having faith, or not discerning the spirit of the law—for the expressions are equivalent—did not feel the need of a Redeemer. They were satisfied with their literal and

external observances, and so, not knowing their failure, were not led to Christ. For the characteristic righteousness of the law knows nothing but law, and seeks life by rigorous obedience of some kind. 'The man which doeth those things shall live by them.' It does not include faith, and must derive all its strength and guidance from an external standard. But the righteousness which is of faith, and includes faith in an incarnate and ascended Saviour, is independent of all further exhibitions of power or declarations of duty. It seeks not to bring Christ down from heaven again, nor to raise Him from the dead again. It has the spring of life within itself, and needs no further replenishment through outward signs. 'The word is nigh thee in thy mouth and in thy heart ; that is, the word of faith which we preach.' And as the Gentiles sought this righteousness by faith, and the Jews did not seek it, God, who is no respecter of persons, heard the Gentiles and made them the depositaries of His truth. 'For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek ; for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon Him.'

There are, moreover, certain measures of a practical kind that accompany the gospel, as distinguished from the law, certain public duties that cleave to

it; and if the Jewish nation be found wanting in the disposition that acknowledges those duties, we cannot wonder at their rejection. The very term ‘good tidings’ implies the telling x. 14. and communicating of them to others.

A silent nation entrusted with the gospel would be an anomaly. ‘Whosoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved;’ such is the universal consequence which the religion of Christ carries with it. But how can men call until they have believed, and how can they believe if they have not heard, and how can they hear if there be no proclaimer, and how shall there be a proclaimer if the good tidings be left in charge of a nation whose boasted and cherished delusion is that they only are the inheritors of the promises of God? And yet their own sacred writings might teach them that not the inheritors but the proclaimers of truth are foremost in honour and favour. ‘How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things.’ But how can the Jews as a nation discharge this primary obligation of the gospel, this active propagation of it among others, seeing that they have not all submitted to it themselves? Their general refusal to accept the gospel might be expressed in the language of Isaiah—‘Lord, who hath

believed our report ? ’—language which, moreover, implies the indispensableness of preaching, as a means of extending the truth of God. But can the Jews plead that this duty, so inherent in the gospel, has not been discharged towards them ? ‘Have they not heard ?’ ‘Yes, verily,’ the Apostle replies, again describing in the words of the Jewish Scriptures the fact that the knowledge of Jesus Christ had been carried into all parts of the world where the scattered nation might be found, ‘their sound went into all the earth, and their words into the ends of the world.’ But after all there was no reason why this revolution should have come with such a shock of surprise on the Jewish nation. They might have known by direct prophecy from the beginning of their history that they were to be exposed to this competition with the Gentile world, and that they would fail in the trial. Moses and Isaiah prepared them for what has come to pass. ‘First Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people, and by a foolish nation I will anger you. But Esaias is very bold and saith, I was found of them that sought me not, I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me. But to Israel he saith, All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people.’

A correct knowledge of election will guard the Israelitish nation against despair, and the whole Christian Church, whether Gentiles or Israelites, against presumption. Has God cast off His once chosen people? The fact that nations are chosen as a means, and not as an end, answers this question. If election were a good and wise thing in and for itself, there would be no medium between election and reprobation; and the instant the Jews ceased to be elect, they must become finally and universally reprobate. But if election be a means, and not an end, no such consequence follows. God has not cast off His people, because He does not cast off for the sake of casting off, nor elect for the sake of electing. He casts off on account of unfitness for a given task, and He elects on account of fitness for the same task. As a nation, the Jews proved themselves unfit, and so as a nation they were cast off; but this does not prevent those among them who were fit from still continuing elect. So far as the Jews were unfit, they were cast off; and so far as they were fit, they remained elect. St. Paul himself was an instance. He was a true-born Jew, yet a chosen instrument of Christ. By fixed and immutable principles, God has His people within His people, His Israel within Israel.

‘At this present time also there is a remnant according to election of grace.’ If this inner election were made on account of mere fore-ordination, of course it would follow that the remainder were fore-ordained to destruction. But it is not so ; the remnant are men who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal, and who are thereby proved to be fit to do God’s work. Is election, then, according to works? There are two dangers associated with the idea of election. If election were absolute and final, men would boast of God’s exclusive love ; if it were founded on merit, men would boast of their superior goodness. The expression ‘election of favour’ excludes and guards against both dangers. Nations are chosen not absolutely, but for their fitness ; so they cannot rest in predetermined divine favouritism. But this fitness is faith, and this excludes the idea of merit. The primary notion of Christian faith annihilates the thought of obtaining anything for the sake of works, because faith includes in its definition the idea of trust in another for something which we could not obtain for ourselves. The election that is on account of faith must be accepted as a favour, and the election that is accepted as a favour cannot be boasted of as a right. The fitness arising from

faith cannot contain in it the possibility of boasting of fitness. But the fitness on the part of the elect and the unfitness on the part of the non-elect still remain. The Jews as a nation had eyes and saw not. The Gentiles had eyes and saw. Election was because of seeing, non-election because of wilful blindness. Israel, then, has not been blinded in order that it might fall. Rejection is not for rejection's sake. The fall of Israel was not the end sought. On the contrary, the spread of the truth, and the lifting up of mankind thereby, is the end sought, and the Jewish fall is made to contribute to it. Everything is made conducive to that. The salvation of men is the only predestined, predetermined thing, and our ecclesiastical fortunes as nations or as individuals are as ripples on the stream of history that bears that consummation onward. These ripples may seem cruel billows to us, but to God they are as when the whisper of His winds awakens the surface of the summer lake into smiles. And if we rise somewhat more to a level with God's purpose, they will seem to us as to Him. God makes all things to contribute to His ends. The Jews elected were elected for the world's good; their fitness was made to contribute to it. The Jews

rejected were rejected for the world's good; their unfitness was made to contribute to it. Their rejection was even made to contribute to its own reversal, because the sight of Gentiles chosen to fill their place would rouse them from their slumber of absolute election and legal merit to the true election of faith. One rule of the divine conduct is obvious: election is because of fitness, and fitness because of faith, and faith excludes boasting. 'Because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not high-minded, but fear.' Thus one purpose in unbroken continuity runs through the vicissitudes of the world's life. Nations are made to be warnings to each other, and to counterbalance each other. The failure of one instrument of spreading God's kingdom on earth produces the success of another, and the success of the latter reverberates on the torpor of the former and awakens it. And so God's work goes on. Each instrument at the time is chosen for its faith, and continues elect only while it believes. And the disbelief of one helps the belief of another, and the belief of the other recoils on the disbelief of the first, and thus, by a series of alternations and reactions, the world is being saved. 'For as ye in

times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief, even so have these also now not believed, that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy. For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that He might have mercy upon all.'

NOTES.

Ch. i. 1.—Κληρός occurs Exod. xii. 16, and eleven times in the twenty-third chapter of Lev., to express the appointment of certain days as holy. From this usage we can infer that the holiness in question was only an understanding between God and man that such days should be considered and observed as holy, God commanding, and man consenting, that they should be so observed, but the efficacy of the appointment and the reality of the holiness depending on the general obedience of the worshippers. The word is also found in Judges xiv. 11 ; 2 Kings xv. 11 (2 Sam. in English Version), and 3 Kings i. 41, 49 (1 Kings in English Version). In the second of those instances, where the reading is somewhat doubtful, the reference is to a body of men called or summoned to follow Absalom in ignorance of his purpose, in the other three to guests or persons invited to a feast. In this latter case the meaning is not strictly either guests or invited persons, but invited persons who have accepted the invitation or call, and consented to become guests ; the efficacy of the call, and the reality of the character or relation, still depending on the conduct of the persons concerned.

In the Gospels 'called' is only twice to be met with ; Matt. xx. 16, and xxii. 14. In the first passage it relates to the word 'sent' in verse 2 ; in the second to 'gathered

together' in verse 10. Thus it still expresses a dependent relation or state acquired by a call or mission, and by assent to it; the conduct proper to the state or relation remaining in the power of the persons to whom the word is applied. There is nothing unconditionally fixed or final in the meaning of the term.

In the remaining portions of the New Testament, the word occurs nine times:—Rom. i. 1, 6, 7; viii. 28; 1 Cor. i. 1, 2, 24; Jude 1; Apoc. xvii. 14. In Rom. i. 7, and 1 Cor. i. 2, it expresses the appointment or call of Christians to be holy. This is the end for which God has called them, and by professing to consent to his call they are placed in a relation, the proper characteristic of which is holiness. This characteristic they are bound to fulfil, but the word 'called' implies only the relation and not the fulfilment of its duties. In Rom. i. 1, and 1 Cor. i. 1, it expresses the appointment or designation of Paul to the special office or relation of apostle. All Christians are called or appointed to be holy; Paul, moreover, was appointed to be an apostle. The office or relation was acquired by God's call or appointment, and Paul's acceptance of it. The reality of the title, or the efficacy of the appointment, depended on the due discharge of the duties belonging to the office or relation. In the other passages it is employed absolutely to express the appointment or call of Christians by God, and their assent to it; the nature of the character and duties to which they had been called being taken for granted; just as it had been employed to express the appointment or call of guests, in application to persons invited to a feast and accepting the invitation, without specifying the nature of the relation, and without implying the realisation of its duties. On the whole, a person 'called'

is not one to whom the call has come with purposed efficacy on the part of the caller, nor one who has in reality responded to the call, nor yet one called without any reference to the effect or result of the call upon him, but one who, by reason of his being called and professing to assent and respond to the call, has assumed a new condition, relation, and responsibility. The word means appointed, enrolled, officially or ecclesiastically designated.

ἐναγγέλιον. The Old Testament from its earliest record to its latest abounds with promises of a coming time when the spirit of evil should be overthrown, when truth and justice should reign, when men should be delivered from the bondage of ancestral and personal sin, when nations should forget their jealousies and all become one people of the Lord, when law should not be an outward terror but an inward spiritual instinct, when knowledge should be the equal privilege of all, when purity and peace and good-will should flourish over the whole earth. The arrival of this reign or kingdom, with the additional powers of Reconciliation and Immortality, was the Gospel which Jesus preached, which He left to his disciples to preach for ever (Matt. xxiv. 14), and for the fulfilment of which He taught us to petition our Father whenever we pray.

4. *ὁρισθέντος*. 'Appointed.' Not absolutely appointed Son of God, but appointed Son of God with the spiritual power of holiness (Matt. xxviii. 18).

5. *ὑπὲρ τοῦ ὀνόματος αὐτοῦ*—as opposed to the glory of the apostle. Comp. 1 Cor. i. 15; 3 John, 7.

17. *δικαιοσύνη*. The characteristic justice of God, i.e. the justice which provides a remedy and a pardon for sin (comp. iii. 26). A just man is one who is characterised by the justice which God has exhibited towards him (comp. Matt. i. 19, and the parable of the unforgiving servant).

19. τὸ γινώσκόν. See Gen. ii. 9, and comp. Plut. *Vit. Fab. Max.* iv.

Ch. iii. 25. πάρεσιν. See Plut. *Symp.* lib. iii. quæst. v. ii.; Phil. *Quod Det. Pot.* 46; Steph. *Thes.* vol. iv. 4441: and comp. Heb. xii. 12; 2 Sam. iv. 1; Jer. xx. 9; Zeph. iii. 16; Eccclus. ii. 12, 13; xxv. 23; Joseph. *Ant.* xiii. 12, 5.

Ch. iv. 4, 5. ἐργαζομένῳ. Several modern commentators translate 'to him that works for hire.' This interpretation affords no conceivable relation between the two members of the fifth verse. There is no species of contrast or incompatibility between working for hire and believing in a God who justifies the ungodly, unless working for hire includes the notion of doing a perfect work, which of course it is not meant to do by those who propose this rendering. Working for a reward is the lowest form of Christianity, but it is not inconsistent with believing in a Saviour. But the great objection is that the idea thus introduced has no pertinence to the occasion—that it interrupts the regular order of the apostle's argument. The question is whether Abraham's justification, considered as a fact, was through faith or works. This question will not be in the least degree helped by settling what form of words are to be used in reference to one who works for hire. It will not advance the position of the Jewish opponent to prove that Abraham worked for hire; neither does it advance the apostle's position to prove that he did not. The fourth and fifth verses are not a statement of doctrine or principle, but simply an argument founded on the proper use of language. It had been said of Abraham that his faith was counted to him for righteousness. This language, St. Paul argues, can be fitly used only of one justified by faith, and different language would be employed of one justified by works. Those verses should never be separated from the context.

Ch. v. 7.—‘For barely for a just man one will die, for a just man I say, because for the Right some would even boldly die.’ See xiii. 4; 1 Thess. v. 15; and comp. *αὐτὸς ὢν τὸ ἀγαθόν*, Phil. *De Sept. et Fest.*

Ch. vi. 2. *ἀπεθάνομεν τῇ ἁμαρτίᾳ*, ‘are dead by sin.’ A similar expression occurs in Gal. ii. 19, *διὰ νόμου νόμῳ ἀπέθανον*, ‘I through the law am dead by the law.’ The law made him a sinner, and then put him to death for being one.

14. ‘You must not permit sin to have dominion over you,’ Matt. xvi. 22; xx. 26; 2 Cor. xi. 10.

Ch. xii. 2. *ἀνακαινώσει τοῦ νοῦς*, ‘by the renewing agency of the mind.’ Comp. Tit. iii. 5, Rom. vi. 4, vii. 6. The idea is not the renewal of the mind by the Spirit, but the renewal of the body by the spiritualised mind. The subjugation of the body to the mind is essentially a ‘reasonable service.’

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